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Addendum

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Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 (item 4 (b))

Section 9. Economic and social affairs

1. At its 23rd and 24th meetings, on 21 June 1999, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered section 9, Economic and social affairs, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 (A/54/6 (Sect. 9)).

2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the budget section and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration thereof.

Discussion

3. Support was expressed for this programme, the overall orientation of which is to strengthen the role of the United Nations in the promotion of international cooperation for development. Its key role in the promotion of the development of the developing countries and in providing support to the intergovernmental processes in the economic and social fields was recognized.

4. The view was expressed that the work of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs is to assist Member States at their request and in accordance with their national policies aimed at the promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development.

5. The view was expressed that poverty alleviation, gender mainstreaming and the advancement of women should be considered as priority activities. The view was also expressed that particular attention should be paid to the special needs of Africa and least

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developed countries, small island developing States, South-South cooperation and financing for development.

5. The view was expressed that the narrative on expected accomplishments needed further refinement in order to ascertain achievement or otherwise. The view was also expressed that programme managers needed to implement more fully the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, which require self-evaluation and identification of activities which are inefficient, ineffective or irrelevant. The view was expressed that the formulation of expected accomplishments was not feasible for some activities dealing with economic and social affairs.

6. Concern was expressed about the decline in extrabudgetary resources and the negative effect that such reductions might have on the implementation of activities. It was stressed that the estimates of extrabudgetary resources under the Trust Fund for the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action for the biennium 2000–2001 should be higher than in the biennium 1998–1999. The view was expressed that every effort should be made to implement all the activities under subprogramme 2, Gender issues and advancement of women. The view was also expressed that the Department of Economic and Social Affairs should implement all the activities included in its programme of work.

7. The view was expressed that the activities of subprogramme 2 should lead to improvement of the status of women in the United Nations Secretariat by ensuring the upward mobility of women in the General Service staff category, irrespective of nationality, through the competitive examinations for promotion to the Professional category of staff members from other categories ("G to P exams"). The view was also expressed that the objective of 50/50 gender distribution by the year 2000 should be reflected in paragraph 9.66 of the section. It was suggested that gender issues should be incorporated into all programmes of the United Nations system and that subprogramme 2 should become a programme, since the subject was broad.

8. The view was expressed with concern that, after the streamlining of the Secretariat in the context of the reform, the new Department of Economic and Social Affairs should have benefited from more extrabudgetary resources, instead of experiencing a decline.

9. The view was expressed that the narrative dealing with inter-agency affairs, under Executive direction and management, needed to be elaborated further.

10. The view was expressed on the need for more cooperation between the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and United Nations funds and programmes in carrying out South-South cooperation activities.

11. It was noted that, in a number of cases, activities had been proposed without proper mandates and that, in other cases, the proposed activities did not appear to cover the issues in all their aspects.

12. The view was expressed that there was a need to maintain strong interlinkages between the subprogrammes of section 9, to enable the intergovernmental processes to address the economic and social issues, in particular, cross-cutting issues, in an integrated manner.

13. The view was expressed that activities related to the implementation of the world solar programme 1996–2005 should be included in the programme of work of the section.

14. While the emphasis in the narrative on electronic dissemination of publications was noted, it was stressed that the Department should continue to use traditional means of dissemination for the benefit of those not in a position to use electronic means.

15. It was noted that, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 52/198 of 18 December 1997, the regular budget of the United Nations ceased financing the activities of the Interim Secretariat of the Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa on 31 December 1998 and that, as from 1 January 1999, the activities of the Permanent Secretariat were funded exclusively through assessed contributions of the parties to the Convention and other extrabudgetary resources.

16. The view was expressed that, in the context of the preparations for the 2000 Millennium Assembly, the United Nations should initiate partnership relationships with major religious institutions for a close cooperation in finding solutions to some important economic and social problems of the world. The view was expressed that the non-governmental organizations and other institutions have their own process of preparation for the 2000 Millennium Assembly.

17. The view was expressed that the activities related to economic coercive measures imposed on developing countries, included in subprogramme 8, Public Administration, finance and development, should be moved to subprogramme 7, Global development trends, issues and policies.

18. The view was expressed that, given the significant increased workload and the level of responsibility of the Non-Governmental Organizations Section of the Secretariat, it should have all the required resources in order to enable it to carry out efficiently its mandate, in particular to support substantively the Committee of Non-Governmental Organizations.

Conclusions and recommendations

19. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of section 9, Economic and social affairs, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001, subject to the following modifications:

(a) In the penultimate sentence of paragraph 9.4, the word "landlocked" should be inserted after the words "least developed countries", and this change should be reflected throughout the entire narrative of section 9, wherever reference is made to "least developed countries and small island developing States";

(b) In paragraph 9.58, line 4, after the phrase "in particular its Second Committee, and," the words "as appropriate" should be deleted;

(c) In paragraph 9.98, line 6, after the phrase "Agenda 21, adopted by the General Assembly at its nineteenth special session (resolution S-19/2)," the phrase "the resolution endorsing the World Solar Programme 1996–2005 as a contribution to the overall sustainable development agenda, adopted by the General Assembly at its fifty-third session (resolution 53/7)," should be inserted;

(d) Add a paragraph 9.103 *bis* as follows:

"9.103 *bis*. In compliance with General Assembly resolution 53/7 of 16 October 1998, concrete action will be undertaken by the Secretary-General in consultation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other relevant organizations to ensure that the World Solar Programme 1996–2005 is fully integrated and brought into the mainstream of the efforts of the United Nations system to attain the objective of sustained economic growth and sustainable development.";

(e) In paragraphs 9.105 (a) (v), 9.105 (b) (iii), 9.105 (d) (i) and 9.107, after the phrase "integrated water resources management" the words "and development" should be inserted and this change should be reflected throughout the entire narrative of section 9, wherever reference is made to "integrated water resources management".

20. The Committee noted the increasing workload and responsibilities of the Non-Governmental Organizations Section, which prevented it from carrying out its activities efficiently, effectively and expeditiously, and welcomed the proposal to strengthen this activity by allocating adequate resources in the proposed programme budget.